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ABSTRACT

This instrument was developed to assist educational leaders in the collection of data relating to the attitudes of their publics on vital social and educational concerns. It classifies the concerns under: social problems, school program, teachers and instruction, administration, students, and index of attitude toward change. It provides for profiles of the six classifications to enable educational leaders to examine the interrelationships between the attitudes of the public concerning social problems and their attitudes toward educational needs in the community. (Author)

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THE OPINIONAIRE OF SOCIAL–EDUCATIONAL CONCERNS

by

Ralph Eddins

Developed Through Support
of
A Faculty Research Grant

EA 005 569

Stephen F. Austin State University
Nacogdoches, Texas

1971

THE OPINIONAIRE OF
SOCIAL–EDUCATIONAL CONCERNS

Directions: Read each item carefully. Answer each item concerning schools in terms of your own community needs. Answer each item concerning broad social problems in terms of their effect on the needs of the children in your community. Your answers should reflect your sincere opinion.

Marking the answer sheet: Each item is a statement of opinion. You may (a) agree, (b) partly agree, (c) partly disagree, of (d) disagree. Partly agree is more inclined to agree and partly disagree is more inclined to disagree.

1. What the school teaches must be changed to meet the needs of the times.
2. Most teachers are interested in their pupils as individuals.
3. The school should prepare children to accept social change.
4. Our schools prepare children to make a successful living.
5. The schools should offer courses for adults that teach them things they can enjoy in their leisure time.
6. The school board should make policies based on expert advice and let the professional staff operate the schools within the bounds of the policies.
7. Children would learn better if each teacher had fewer pupils.
8. Our schools keep us well informed on the decisions and activities of the schools.
9. Drug abuse among teenagers is cause for alarm in our community.
10. Courses to help children understand our economic system are urgently needed.
11. Permissive attitudes of adults toward moral standards and sexual behavior is cause for alarm among parents and educators.
12. Our school buildings and equipment are good enough for the education of our children.
13. Most people are not concerned with problems of others and prefer not to be involved in civic affairs.
14. The school's role is to help bring about social change.
15. Students should help make rules, decisions and plan courses.
16. Married students should have the same privileges as other students.
17. School board policy should provide for due process of law in dismissing a teacher.
18. The school should offer enough courses to meet the needs of all students, even if districts have to be consolidated to make enrollment large enough to do this.
19. Teachers know too little about the socio-economic background of their students.
20. Special classes should be provided for all children with learning disabilities.
21. Student protest demonstrations are acceptable if they are orderly and do not violate the law.
22. Subject matter taught by the school should be directly related to the needs of children in present day society.

23. Law and order must be preserved even at the risk of depriving certain individuals of their rights.
24. The school should have a well planned program of instruction on the harmful effects of the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco.
25. Schools should provide a year round instructional program.
26. Teachers should try new methods, materials, or instructional devises that show reasonable promise even at the risk of failure.
27. The school should set reasonable but specific codes for dress and appearance of students.
28. Our school should provide a kindergarten program for all children age five to six.
29. School costs should be reduced by eliminating some programs.
30. Today's youth are guided by material values, lack a sense of responsibility, pride in achievement, self discipline and respect for authority.
31. Children and youth are entitled to the same basic freedoms under law as adults.
32. Teachers and administrators should be held accountable for the progress of students.
33. Children are strongly influenced in their attitudes by what they see on television.
34. The school should change its organization or programs if such change promises a better education for children.
35. High school students should be allowed to hear speakers whose views on religion, politics, and morals differ radically from those of their parents and community.
36. Parents should be more directly involved in shaping school policies and programs.
37. Teachers keep parents well informed on the problems and progress of each student.
38. I would vote to raise taxes to improve the school program if school leaders said it would take a great deal of money.
39. Corporal punishment is usually effective in the solution of discipline problems.
40. Improved relationships between blacks and whites is a matter of urgent concern in our community.
41. I would like to have conferences with teachers of my children and participate in decisions related to their individual problems.
42. Courses in problems of marriage and family should be provided for high school students of both sexes.
43. My contacts with teachers through visits, conferences, PTA etc. lead me to see the school as a friendly and stimulating place for children to learn.
44. The superintendent and his staff are providing leadership that gives our community an educational program that meets the needs of all children.
45. A disturbing number of people do not possess the skills or education to be fully employed or make wise economic choices.
46. Vocational programs should be designed to train people for work in occupations that have the best job opportunities.
47. Most children respect the rights of those with whom they disagree.

48. Sex education appropriate for each age level should be provided by the school.
49. All students should meet the same requirements for graduation.
50. Teachers should have time during the school day to prepare materials and lessons for classroom use.
51. The U.S. should solve its own social problems instead of becoming involved in foreign political and military commitments..
52. A student should be suspended only when his presence will reduce the school's effectiveness in teaching other students.
53. Unstable families, divorce, and broken homes are serious social problems.
54. Students should be given national tests to compare their achievement with students in other parts of the country.
55. The school should provide adult basic education programs.

MANUAL
FOR USE AND INTERPRETATION
OF

THE OPINIONAIRE OF
SOCIAL–EDUCATIONAL CONCERNS

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THE OPINIONAIRE OF SOCIAL–EDUCATIONAL CONCERNS

I. Purpose and Uses

The Opinionaire of Social-Educational Concerns was developed to assist educational leaders in the collection of data relating to the attitudes of their publics on vital social and educational concerns. It classifies the concerns under six headings: (1) social problems; (2) school program: (3) teachers and instruction; (4) administration; (5) students; and (6) index of attitude toward change. It provides for profiles of the six classifications to enable educational leaders to examine the interrelationships between the attitudes of the public concerning social problems and their attitudes toward educational needs in the community.

This instrument can be useful to study the attitudes of the community through the selection of a random sample or for comparing attitudes by sampling specific segments of the community. It can be useful in the process of school evaluation in the study of the philosophy of the community as well as describing the school and community. It can be used to gain insight into concerns affecting a number of educational decisions. It might well be used to compare the attitudes of the teaching staff and those of the community to identify any serious differences.

II. Development of the instrument

A. Experimental Instrument

Statements of social educational concerns were developed from interviews with teachers in forty-six East Texas school districts in 1970. Other statements were developed from concerns reflected in the Gallup Poll on education 1971, current commentaries on social-educational problems by accepted authorities, and suggestions from educational leaders. The preliminary form consisted of 125 items. The preliminary instrument was submitted to a panel of highly qualified educators for evaluation and suggestions. The experimental instrument of 75 items was developed from a revision of the preliminary instrument. The experimental instrument was administered to a sample of non-teachers selected from twenty school districts in East Texas. The sample represented all segments of the community.

B. Statistical Analysis of Items

Internal consistency was analyzed using a split-half technique and the Kuder-Richardson formula to establish reliability. The Spearman-Brown prophesy formula was used to estimate the full length reliability of the instrument, which was .77. A reliability coefficient of this type gives an indication of the extent to which a person would make the same score if he responded to the instrument again.

Correlation coefficients between response to a single and response to the total instrument were computed. Table 1 shows the coefficient for each item. A standard of .25 was set for item correlation. Items

that did not meet this standard were either revised or rejected.

Table 1. Correlation Between Performance on a Single Item and Total Score (N-88)

Item No.	R.	Item No.	R.	Item No.	R.	Item No.	R.	Item No.	R.
1.	.25	16.	.25	31.	.31	46.	.32	61.	.31
2.	.21*	17.	.39	32.	.16*	47.	.26	62.	.39
3.	.41	18.	.35	33.	.31	48.	.56	63.	18*
4.	.48	19.	.41	34.	.36	49.	.34	64.	.35
5.	.38	20.	.36	35.	.20*	50.	.41	65.	.26
6.	.26	21.	.13*	36.	.17*	51.	.11*	66.	.40
7.	.23*	22.	.34	37.	.19*	52.	.21*	67.	.38
8.	.43	23.	.41	38.	.29	53.	.40	68.	.35
9.	.49	24.	.29	39.	.16*	54.	.37	69.	.48
10.	.21*	25.	.63	40.	.31	55.	.28	70.	.51
11.	.40	26.	.51	41.	.59	56.	.34	71.	.17*
12.	.23*	27.	.41	42.	.23*	57.	.19*	72.	.44
13.	.23*	28.	.28	43.	.42	58.	.26	73.	.21*
14.	.17*	29.	.25	44.	.41	59.	.16*	74.	19*
15.	.24*	30.	.34	45.	.34	60.	.43	75.	.42

*Items failing to meet the .21 standard. Some of these items were revised and some were deleted.

The completed instrument contains fifty-five items. Each of these items were analyzed for readability on the sixth grade level to make the instrument useable with most public school patrons.

III. Directions for Administration

A. Use a spearate answer sheet providing a four choice response. This can be done with a mimeographed sheet. However, it is recommended that a computer answer sheet to be used for large samples. If the mails are used it may be necessary to use the mimeographed answer sheet and transfer the returns to the computer sheet, thus, preventing bending the computer cards. Computer service to tabulate the results is available through Region VII Educational Service Center.

2. Careful instructions should be prepared for respondents so they understand the nature of the study you are making.

3. Identification of the respondent is unnecessary but if you plan to make comparisons between groups the answer sheet should provide a means to identify the group from which the respondent comes.

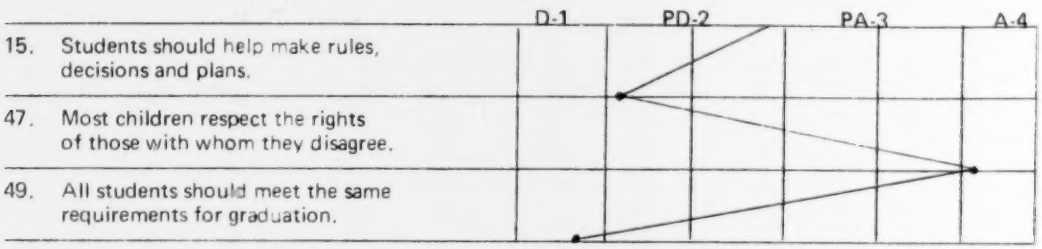
4. Consultant services to assist in designing specific studies using this instrument or an adaptation of it can be arranged with the author through Region VII Education Service Center.

IV. Interpreting Results

The computer program designed for tabulating results of The Opinionaire of Social - Educational Concerns assigns a point value to each of the four possible responses: Agree-4; Partly Agree-3; Partly disagree-2; Disagree-1. The tabulated results are simply the average of all responses to each item. This allows results to be profiled for each item to give a picture of the degree to which the group under study agrees or disagrees with the position taken in each item.

Profile Example: (From Profile V. - Student Related Concerns)

Item No.	Median Rating
15.	1.7
47.	3.8
49.	1.4


D-1
PD-2
PA-3
A-4
15. Students should help make rules, decisions and plans.
47. Most children respect the rights of those with whom they disagree.
49. All students should meet the same requirements for graduation.

The items in the instrument are organized into six profiles to give a picture of attitudes toward that group of concerns.

1. Societal Concerns: This profile reflects the degree to which the respondents consider the major social problems to be related to their community.
2. Educational Program Concerns: Items in this profile reflect attitudes toward an educational program based on societal needs.
3. Professional Staff Concerns: These items explore attitudes toward the performance, relationships, and needs of the professional staff.
4. Administrative Concerns: This pictures responses to the organization, finances, and management of the schools.
5. Student Related Concerns: This classification deals with the role, rights and needs of students in school as seen through the attitudes of the respondents.
6. Index of Attitude Toward Change: Throughout the instrument and the other five profiles there are items that indicate attitude toward making changes, these are grouped into one profile.

The use of these profiles can enable educational leaders to identify conflicts between social concerns and educational concerns as well as conflicting attitudes between groups. The degree to which a group or groups hold an opinion on an item should be useful data in making decisions.